

Message Text

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FOR CARTER FROM PA

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SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HEREWITH FULL TEXT H.D.S. GREENWAY BY-LINER, WASHINGTON POST, THURSDAY, JANUARY 19, HEADED "SADAT STEP SHOWS MISPERCEPTIONS ARE DEEP ON BOTH SIDES."

2. JERUSALEM, JANUARY 18--IS THE DRAMATIC PEACE INITIATIVE THAT EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT ANWAR SADAT BEGAN IN NOVEMBER COMING TO AN UNTIMELY AND PREMATURE END?

3. IT IS TOO EARLY TO GIVE SUCH A PESSIMISTIC INTERPRETATION TO THE APPARENT FAILURE OF THIS FIRST ROUND OF ERIOSUS AND UBSTANTIVE TALKS. BUT THE QUIXOTIC BEHAVIOR OF THE PARTICIPANTS POINTS THE GREAT GULF BETWEEN THE ISRAELI AND EGYPTIAN PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT
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THE SADAT INITIATIVE IS ALL ABOUT--A GULF FAR MORE SERIOUS THAN THE GULF BETWEEN THE ARAB AND ISRAELI NEGOTIATING POSITIONS.

4. IT WAS INEVITABLE, AFTER THE MANIC HIGH FOLLOWING THE SADAT VISIT TO JERUSALEM, THAT A PERIOD OF DEPRESSION WOULD FOLLOW.

5. FOLLOWING THE ANGRY EGYPTIAN REACTION TO ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER MENACHEM BEGON'S SPEECH LAST NIGHT, OPPOSITION LEADER SHIMON PERES SAID REGRETFULLY THAT IT WAS ALL LIKE A MOVIE IN WHICH THE HAPPY ENDING HAD COME AT THE BEGINNING INSTEAD OF THE END.

6. THE ISRAELIS HAD TENDED TO SEE THIS ENTIRE PROCESS AS THE BEGINNING OF A LONG BARGAINING PROCEDURE IN WHICH BOTH SIDES WOULD BE FREE TO PUT THEIR PLANS ON THE TABLE AND ARGUE OVER THEM TO ACHIEVE A COMPROMISE.

7. THE EGYPTIANS, ON THE OTHER HAND, SAW THE SADAT INITIATIVE AS A BOLD STROKE THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO CUT THROUGH ALL THE BARGAINING AND HAGGLING OF NORMAL NEGOTIATIONS BY GIVING THE ISRAELIS ACCEPTANCE, PEACE AND SECURITY IN EXCHANGE FOR THE CAPTURED TERRITORIES.

8. THIS DIFFERENCE CAN BE SEEN IN SADAT'S RECENT AND DEEP PESSIMISM TO THE EFFECT THAT THE ISRAELIS HAD COMPLETELY MISUNDERSTOOD HIS PEACE INITIATIVE. DAYAN, IN TURN, COMPLAINED YESTERDAY THAT THE EGYPTIANS WERE TRYING TO HAND HIM A "TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT" ULTIMATUM WHILE THE EGYPTIANS FELT THEY HAD NOTHING MORE TO GIVE.

9. ANOTHER PROBLEM IS THAT EGYPTIANS, ESPECIALLY NOW
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THAT THEY ARE ALMOST ISOLATED IN THE ARAB WORLD, FEEL THAT THEY CANNOT AFFORD TO MAKE A SEPARATE PEACE WITH ISRAEL. THE ISRAELIS PAY LIP SERVICE TO THIS CONCEPT BUT PRIVATELY, THEY SAY THAT A SEPARATE PEACE WITH EGYPT IS THEIR BEST CHANCE. DAYAN SAID PUBLICLY YESTERDAY THAT HE DID NOT SEE HOW SADAT COULD GUARANTEE THE BEHAVIOR OF THE SYRIANS LET ALONE THE PALESTINIANS SHOULD THE ISRAELIS WITHDRAW FROM THE GOLAN HEIGHTS AND THE WEST BANK.

10. BEGIN TOLD EGYPTIAN REPORTERS TODAY THAT ANY GOVERNMENT THAT DECIDED TO REMOVE THE JEWISH SETTLEMENTS FROM THE NORTHERN SINAI'S RAFIAH AREA "WOULD BE DISMISSED BY OUR PARLIAMENT. I TOLD YOUR PRESIDENT," HE SAID, "THAT IN THE LIGHT OF THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR GENERATION, WE SHALL NOT LEAVE JEWISH SETTLEMENTS WITHOUT AN ISRAELI FORCE." HE CALLED THIS A "SACRED PRINCIPLE."

11. BEGIN IS CORRECT IN SAYING THAT THERE IS A NATIONAL CONSENSUS NOT TO RETURN TO 1967 BOUNDARIES, BUT HE IS MOST PROBABLY WRONG TO SAY THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD

FALL IF HE REMOVED ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS FROM THE SINAI.

12. DAYAN WAS PROBABLY CORRECT WHEN HE TOLD THE SETTLERS THAT IF THEY STOOD IN THE WAY OF PEACE THE PEOPLE WOULD NOT BE WITH THEM. ISRAEL WILL NEVER GIVE UP ACCESS TO THE SACRED WAILING WALL, THE JEWISH QUARTER OF OLD JERUSALEM AND OTHER SUCH THINGS BUT BEGIN'S GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT FALL ON THE SINAI SETTLEMENT ISSUE.

13. ALTHOUGH THERE MIGHT BE SOME ARRANGEMENT MADE TO KEEP JEWISH SETTLEMENTS IN THE SINAI AFTER SOVEREIGNTY HAD BEEN RETURNED TO EGYPT, THE CONCEPT OF KEEPING ISRAEL DEFENSE FORCES THERE TO PROTECT THEM SEEMS LIKE NOTHING SHORT OF INSULTING TO THE EGYPTIANS AND IT MAKES UNCLASSIFIED

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A MOCKERY OF THE ISRAELI OFFER TO RETURN SOVEREIGNTY.

14. TO A LARGE DEGREE, BEGIN WAS AT HIS WORST DURING LAST NIGHT'S DINNER AS FAR AS DEALING WITH THE ARABS IS CONCERNED.

15. HE SAID TODAY THAT HE WAS ANGRY THAT THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER HAD ARRIVED IN JERUSALEM SAYING THAT THERE COULD BE NO PEACE UNLESS ISRAEL GAVE BACK EVERYTHING IT HAD CAPTURED IN 1967, INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM. BUT BEGIN'S ARGUMENT AGAINST SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PALESTINIANS DID NOT CARRY MUCH WEIGHT AND THE POLEMIC OVER THE DINNER TABLE ANGERED THE EGYPTIANS.

16. MANY THOUGHTFUL ISRAELIS, INCLUDING SOME IN BEGIN'S OWN PARTY, WORRY THAT BEGIN IS AN ANACHRONISM--TOO MUCH THE POLISH REFUGEE ROOTED IN THE EUROPEAN PAST AND EMOTIONALLY UNEQUIPPED TO DEAL WITH MODERN REALITIES AND POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST.

17. DESPITE ALL THE TELEVISION PLATITUDES TO THE CONTRARY, IT IS NO SECRET IN THE MIDDLE EAST THAT ALTHOUGH SADAT AND ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER EZER WEIZMAN APPEAR TO HAVE ESTABLISHED A RAPPORT, THERE IS LITTLE WARMTH BETWEEN BEGIN AND SADAT.

18. NO JEW, LET ALONE AN ISRAELI, WILL FORGET THE DESTRUCTION OF EUROPEAN JEWRY BY THE NAZIS, BUT FEW ISRAELIS TODAY DWELL UPON IT TO THE SAME EXTENT AS DOES BEGIN. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT NEITHER OF THE AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OF BEGIN'S TOP LIEUTENANTS, WEIZMAN AND DAYAN, HAVE MUCH TO SAY ABOUT THE NAZI HOLOCAUST, WHILE BEGIN'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY MENTIONS IT AGAIN AND AGAIN. UNCLASSIFIED

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19. BOTH WEIZMAN AND DAYAN ARE NATIVE BORN AND MORE CONCERNED WITH THE MIDDLE EAST THAN WITH THE EUROPEAN PAST.

20. ONLY THOSE WHO RECALL BEGIN'S EUROPEAN ROOTS COULD UNDERSTAND HIS ARGUMENT AGAINST SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PALESTINIANS LAST NIGHT WHEN HE SAID THAT SELF-DETERMINATION HAD BEEN ABUSED IN EUROPE BEFORE WORLD WAR II AND THAT THIS ABUSE HAD BROUGHT DISASTER UPON EUROPE.

21. ONLY THOSE FAMILIAR WITH HIS THINKING COULD GUESS THAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT THE SUDETENLAND CRISIS IN THE 1930S IN WHICH HITLER PERSUADED GREAT BRITAIN AND FRANCE TO LET HIM HAVE THE GERMAN-INHABITED PORTIONS OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA. THIS LED TO THE EVENTUAL TAKEOVER OF ALL CZECHOSLOVAKIA BY GERMANY.

2. WERE BEGIN'S ARGUMENTS TO BE LOGICALLY APPLIED TO THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION, IT COULD BE SAID THAT THE JEWS HAD NO RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION AT THE EXPENSE OF THE ARABS IN THE FIRST PLACE.

23. IN SHORT, THE EGYPTIANS BELIEVE THEY HAVE CLEARED AWAY ALL THE OLD ARGUMENTS OF THE PAST BY ACCEPTING ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE AND THEY NEITHER UNDERSTAND NOR APPRECIATE BEGIN'S REACTIONS AND RHETORICAL REFERENCES TO THE PAST.

24. THIS BASIC MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE TWO POINTS OF VIEW IS PROBABLY THE REASON WHY SADAT, ALWAYS THE MASTER OF SURPRISE DIPLOMACY, HAS RECALLED HIS DELEGATION AND IT WILL NOW BE UP TO THE AMERICANS TO TRY TO PUT THE PIECES BACK TOGETHER.

25. MODERATE ARABS DO NOT DISMISS COMPROMISES OVER
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JEWISH SETTLEMENTS AND OVER THE FUTURE OF THE OLD CITY AND JEWISH CONTROL OF JEWISH HOLY PLACES, BUT THEY INSIST ON A COMMITMENT TO WITHDRAWAL THAT THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT IS AS YET UNABLE TO GIVE.

26. SADAT'S IMPATIENCE IN RECALLING HIS DELEGATION, HOWEVER, STRIKES THE ISRAELIS AND THE AMERICANS AS

MERCURIAL. TO THE ISRAELIS, HIS ACTIONS SEEM SELF-INDULGENT AND EITHER A MISUNDERSTANDING OF ISRAEL OR AN ATTEMPT AT INTIMIDATION.

27. BUT IS IS PROBABLY TRUE THAT BOTH SADAT AND BEGIN HAVE GONE TOO FAR NOW TO COMPLETELY BREAK OFF THE PEACE INITIATIVE AND THEREFORE SADAT'S DRAMATIC GESTURE IS PROBABLY NOT AN INDICATION THAT ALL IS LOST AS FAR AS PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS CONCERNED.

28. IT IS CLEARLY A SERIOUS SETBACK, HOWEVER, AND IN THE MAIN IT IS DUE TO THE BASIC MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN TWO POINTS OF VIEW.

29. IT WAS PERHAPS ALWAYS TOO MUCH TO EXPECT THAT, AFTER SO MANY YEARS OF HOSTILITY, THAT EITHER THE ISRAELIS OR THE EGYPTIANS COULD UNDERSTAND THE MENTAL PROCESS OR THE WAYS IN WHICH DECISIONS ARE ARRIVED AT IN EACH OTHER'S COUNTRY.
CHRISTOPHER

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